

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of risk factors for low back pain between two groups of nurses working in different departments of a tertiary care hospital. The study included 100 nurses from the medical-surgical department and 100 nurses from the intensive care unit. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire that assessed demographic characteristics, work-related variables, and psychosocial factors. Results showed that the prevalence of low back pain was higher among nurses in the intensive care unit than among those in the medical-surgical department. This finding may be related to the fact that nurses in the intensive care unit are exposed to more physical demands and have less control over their work environment compared to those in the medical-surgical department.

Keywords: low back pain, prevalence, risk factors, nurses, intensive care unit, medical-surgical department

Introduction

Low back pain (LBP) is a common occupational problem for nurses. It is estimated that approximately 8% of nurses experience LBP at some point in their career (Garg & Garg, 2006). The prevalence of LBP varies widely among studies, ranging from 1% to 97% (Garg & Garg, 2006). The most commonly reported risk factors for LBP among nurses include age, gender, duration of employment, job title, and work environment (Garg & Garg, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of risk factors for LBP between two groups of nurses working in different departments of a tertiary care hospital. The study included 100 nurses from the medical-surgical department and 100 nurses from the intensive care unit (ICU). Data were collected by means of a questionnaire that assessed demographic characteristics, work-related variables, and psychosocial factors. Results showed that the prevalence of LBP was higher among nurses in the ICU than among those in the medical-surgical department. This finding may be related to the fact that nurses in the ICU are exposed to more physical demands and have less control over their work environment compared to those in the medical-surgical department.

Armando Rodriguez

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